

OFFICERS

President.....Jerry Porter

Vice President.....Ed Krivoniak

Secretary.....Don Carlucci

Treasurer.....Harry Colborn

Curator.....Wayne Homren

Address

Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society
P.O. Box 23404
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-9998



Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society

Founded

June 14, 1878

Pittsburgh, PA



**116th Year
1993-1994**

Unless otherwise noted, meetings will be held the first Tuesday of each month, at the offices of Carnegie Group Inc, Five PPG Place, Downtown. Doors open at 7:00 p.m., meeting begins at 8:15.

September 7, 1993
"Ethics in Numismatics"Mike Homza

October 5, 1993
"Siege Currency"Larry Korchnak

November 2, 1993
Social Meeting
The Westinghouse Castle
Wilmerding, PA

Guest Speaker: Charles Ruch
Westinghouse Historian

December 7, 1993
"Washington, Indian Peace Medals"
.....Rich Crosby

January 4, 1994
"Coins & Medals of the City & Province
of Groningen"Jim Groninger

February 1, 1994
"Coinage & Monetary Policy during the
Roman Civil War, 50-44BC"E. Tomlinson Fort

March 1, 1994
"Collecting U.S. Encased Postage Stamps"
.....Wayne Homren

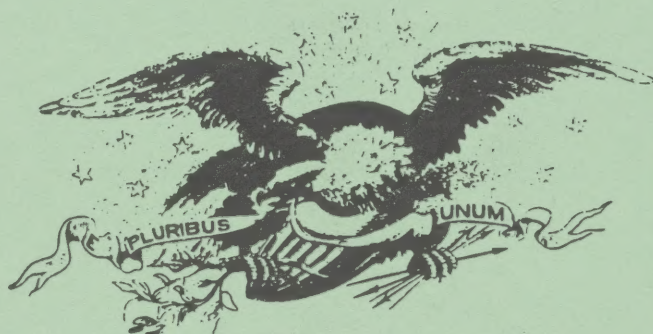
April 5, 1994
"The 1926 National Sesqui-Centennial"
.....Dick Gaetano

May 3, 1994
"The S & L Mystery"Larry Dziubek

June 7, 1994
Annual Business Meeting

July 5, 1994
"Coin Cleaning Seminar"Ed Krivoniak

August 2, 1994
"Irish Gun Money"Pat McBride



The Program Committee urges you to bring recent acquisitions or any other articles of numismatic interest for display at the meetings. Particularly welcome are exhibits related to the current program topic.

Bring a Guest!

Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society
Treasurer's Report, 1992-1993

Beginning with the July, 1992 meeting, WPNS held 12 monthly meetings, including the annual social and business meetings held in November 1992 and June 1993, respectively. Each of the 10 remaining meetings included a prepared discussion with numismatic content.

The number of members increased by one during the year, ending in June, 1993 at 40.

The bank balance at the beginning of July, 1992 was \$3415.45, made up of a \$600 life membership account and \$2815.45 regular account. At the end of June, 1993, the total increased about \$128 to \$3543.29, still including a \$600 life membership account, while the regular account became \$2943.29.

The Society maintains for sale club photos taken in 1991, medals of the Society for 1978, a catalog of Allegheny County brewery tokens, a catalog of encased cents, and a reprint of the original by-laws of the Society.

H.W. Colborn

July 6, 1993

WPNS Curator's Report

June 1, 1993

The duties of the Curator are traditionally very light, and my first term in the office has been no exception to the rule. After receiving the WPNS archives from the previous curator, I dutifully placed them in storage at my home. The most arduous task since that time was to move the archives to an adjoining room before painting the walls.

While I welcome any easy assignment, I cannot help but think our Society would have something to gain from increased efforts on the part of the Curator. To this end, I propose the following duties for the Society's Curator, which I expect to perform in the coming year:

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Resectfully submitted,

Wayne K. Homren

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**GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTERS
OF PAPERS TO THE
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA NUMISMATIC
SOCIETY**

- I. The paper should be the work of and written by the presenter(s).
- II. The paper should be no more than forty minutes in length.
- III. It would be advisable for the presenter(s) to supply visual displays of the material they are discussing in a form that it may be seen by all members at once. Examples of such displays would include slides, transparencies, photocopies, etc...
- IV. It would be helpful for the presenter(s) to supply an abstract, bibliography or even the text of the paper for other members who would like to undertake further research on the topic.

[HISTORY](#)

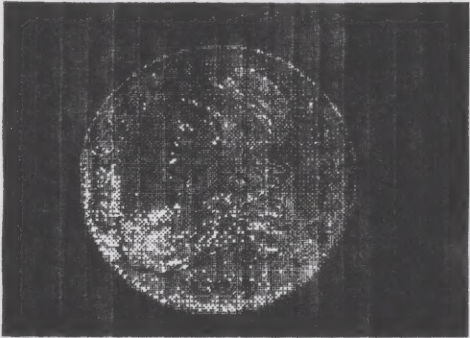
[ARTICLES](#)

[COIN ALBUMS](#)

[BOOKSHELF](#)

[DATABASES](#)

MAIN MENU



[ANCIENT](#)

[MEDIEVAL](#)

[USA](#)

[WORLD](#)

[EXONUMIA](#)



[MISCELLANEOU](#)

[LIST OF ALL](#)

ARTICLES



WORLD ARTICLES

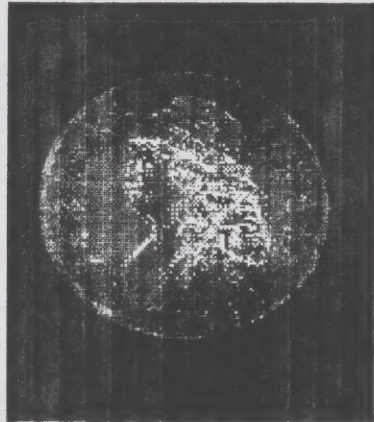
- Animals and Plants
- Collecting topically
- Columbus
- Einstein on Coins
- Ships and Discoverers
- Silver Counterstamps
- Transportation Coinage

[HOME](#)

Article 1

PAT PUGLIANO

Bust Half Varieties



[NEXT](#)

Collecting by Variety

The collecting of Bust Half Dollars by variety seems to have been in vogue ever since the series was first started. Records indicate collector interest before the Civil War. Although coinage lasted only 29 years, 450 distinct varieties have been identified, with the last verified type being the unique 1825 118, discovered in 1958.

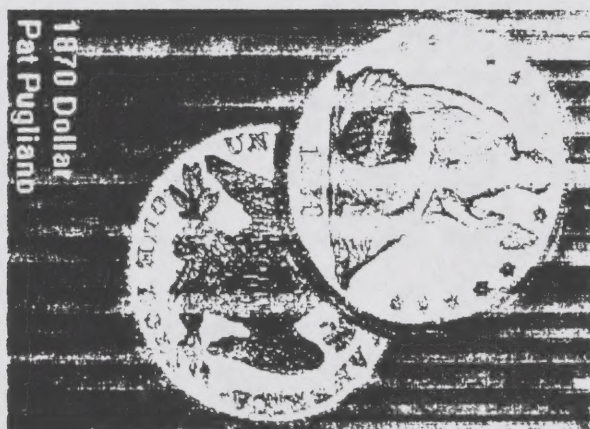
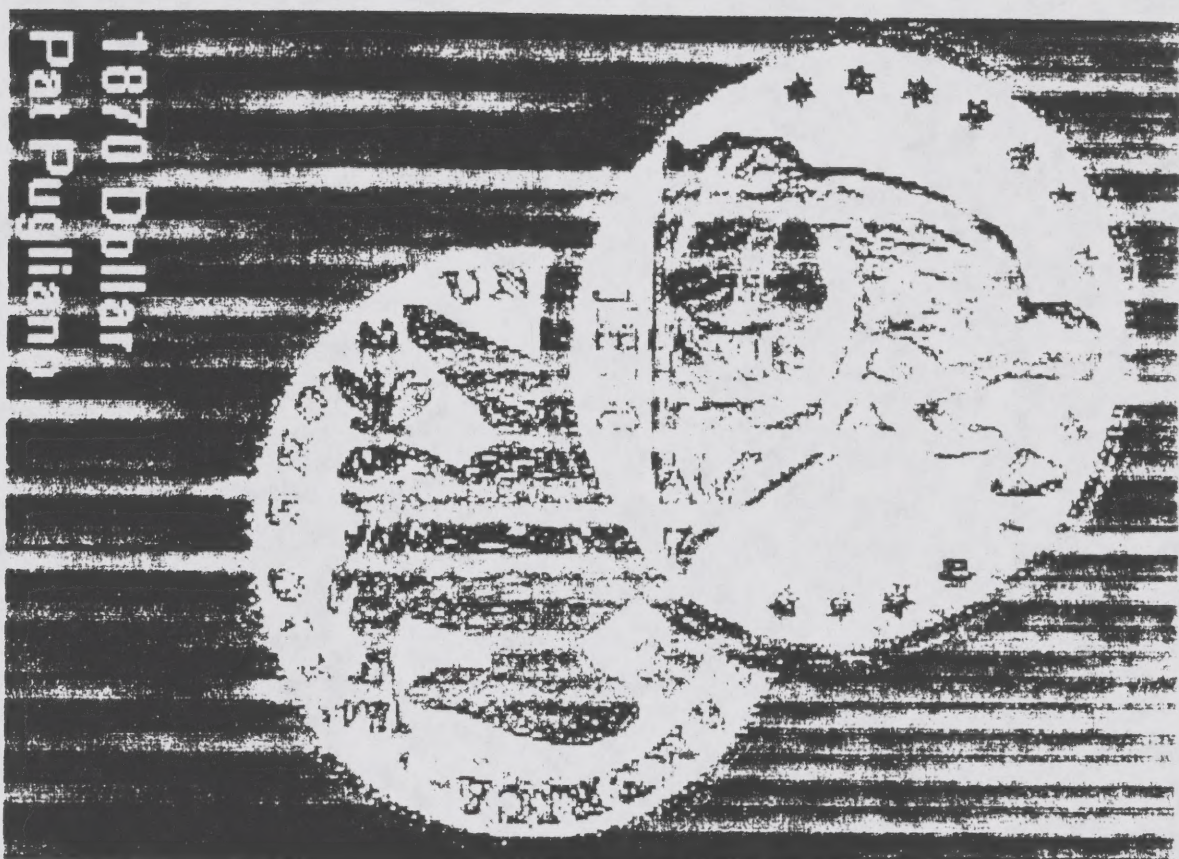
Since the dies were generally prepared by hand, and dies are not eternal, some variety appears in each year of production, with the exception of the scarce 1815. Even here, however, cracks developing in the one set of dies used eventually resulted in an additional variety for that date.

Some of the more popular varieties are the overdates (part of an incorrect date struck over by the correct one). The most famous of these is, unquestionably, the rare 1817/14, of which only 6 or 7 are presently known. Other overdates include the years 1814 and this 1820. ☐

Diebreaks constitute another class of errors, some of which can be quite spectacular, such as the 1813 101 ☐.

1827 has the distinction of being the year which produced the most varieties of this series. 49 distinct varieties are currently recognized, and 9 of these have sub-varieties. Many desirable rarities were produced in this year, including the 148 and 149, both R7.

1823 produced some interesting errors involving the number "3" in the date.



The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society

P.O. Box 23404, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-9998



DATE: July 6, 1993

PLACE: Carnegie Group Offices,
5 PPG Place

TIME: 7:00 P.M. Meeting at 8:15 P.M.

The June meeting of WPNS was attended by eighteen members and one guest. It was the annual business meeting with the election of officers for the coming business year.

The program for the evening of July 6, 1993 will be "The Pan-Pacific Exposition" by club member Neil Conner.

As discussed at our June meeting, find enclosed the following items:

- 1.) The official slate of officers presented by the nominating committee
- 2.) The year end reports as submitted by the club President, Secretary and Curator
- 3.) "Guidelines for Presenters of Papers to the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society"
- 4.) Site map showing location, date, admittance fee, and points of contact for the summer picnic

During the month of July, the following coin shows will be held:

- July 10-11 New Jersey Token - Medal Show
Monticello Inn - Bellmawr, NJ
Turnpike at Route 168
- July 11 Trevoise Coin Show
Fire House - Twining Hall
4900 Street Road
Trevoise, PA
- July 11 Holiday Coin Club Show
Holiday Inn
Route 51 and I 70
Belle Vernon, PA
- July 18 Highpoint Collectibles Show
Ramada Inn
Corner of Route 202 and Route 1
Chadds Ford, PA

We'll see you on Tuesday, July 6, 1993. Bring a friend! Bring an exhibit! Be there!

Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society
Officer Elections
June Business Meeting 1993

The nominating committee respectfully submits the following
officers for re-election:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| President: | Jerry Porter |
| Vice President: | Ed Krivoniac |
| Secretary: | Don Carlucci |
| Treasurer: | Harry Coburn |
| Curator: | Wayne Homren |

Signed

Larry Bassett

Larry Dziubek

Mike Homza

Larry Bassett Larry Dziubek

Mike Homza

June 1, 1993

WPNS PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Gerald S. Porter

June 1, 1993

The year preceding has been uneventful with no "earth shattering" occurrences to upset the relative calm of normal meetings. It saw the successful completion of the WPNS By-Laws booklet by Wayne Homren as well as the Brewery Token catalog by Jerry Porter. One new member was admitted, E. Tomlinson Fort. Wayne Homren and Larry Korchnak participated in the new ANA numismatic radio show. A letter was written to the ANA requesting Pittsburgh be considered for the 1998 ANA convention. Successful jointly held or sponsored events were the August picnic, Christmas party, and PAN Coin Show. Coin Identification Day at the Carnegie was also a success. The November banquet was, in my opinion, a disaster and suggestions are in order regarding changes.

Programs at the monthly meetings were good and varied with subjects ranging from Ancient, Medieval and U.S. Colonial coins to Spanish Colonial mintmarks, Merchant tokens, the Bar Copper, Lincoln and Naval medals and the Columbia Exposition. Most of these were accompanied by scholarly papers.

Monthly meeting attendance had been good from July thru October but decreased slightly from December thru May. I hope this is not a trend as I, for one, thoroughly enjoy the fellowship and numismatic interchange and would not consider missing a meeting. Let's all look forward to the year ahead and try to contribute our talents toward making it one of the best ever.

A Secetary's Report to the Western Pennsylvania
Numismatic Society Concerning the 1992-1993 Numismatic Year

For the betterment of the society, as I reflect upon the year that past, I feel that anyone who gives a presentation to the membership should also present it in written form, not for the benefit of the present members, but for the benefit of posterity. I personally feel that the collectors that follow in generations to come will want to know our interests, our special fields of expertise, and our abilities to record and relate these interests to others. Perhaps, at the end of the year an award can be presented to the individual who has delivered the best, most informative, numismatic presentation.

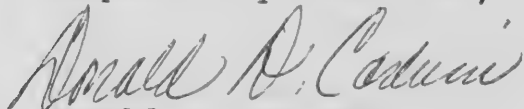
I also feel that the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society should never be known as or perceived as a closed, elite group of numismatic scholars, only interested in the wants and needs of its own membership. As one of the oldest numismatic societies in the nation, we should never hesitate to endorse and foster the wants and needs of not only the local numismatic community, but the goals and programs of both state and national numismatic organizations. Bringing the American Numismatic Association Convention Show back to Pittsburgh should be of top priority.

My last goal that the organization might entertain is the striking of a modern WPNS medal, perhaps in silver. All past WPNS medals have been received with much enthusiasm; are highly sought after by local and national coin club medal collectors; and have become a challenge to collect in their entirety. An 1878 to 1993 medal, commemorating the 115th anniversary of the organization could be

struck. Perhaps, a local, state, or national event or historical milestone could be recorded.

The above comments and observation are my own and are only meant for the consideration of the society.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Donald D. Carlucci".

Donald D. Carlucci
Secretary

WPNS Curator's Report

June 1, 1993

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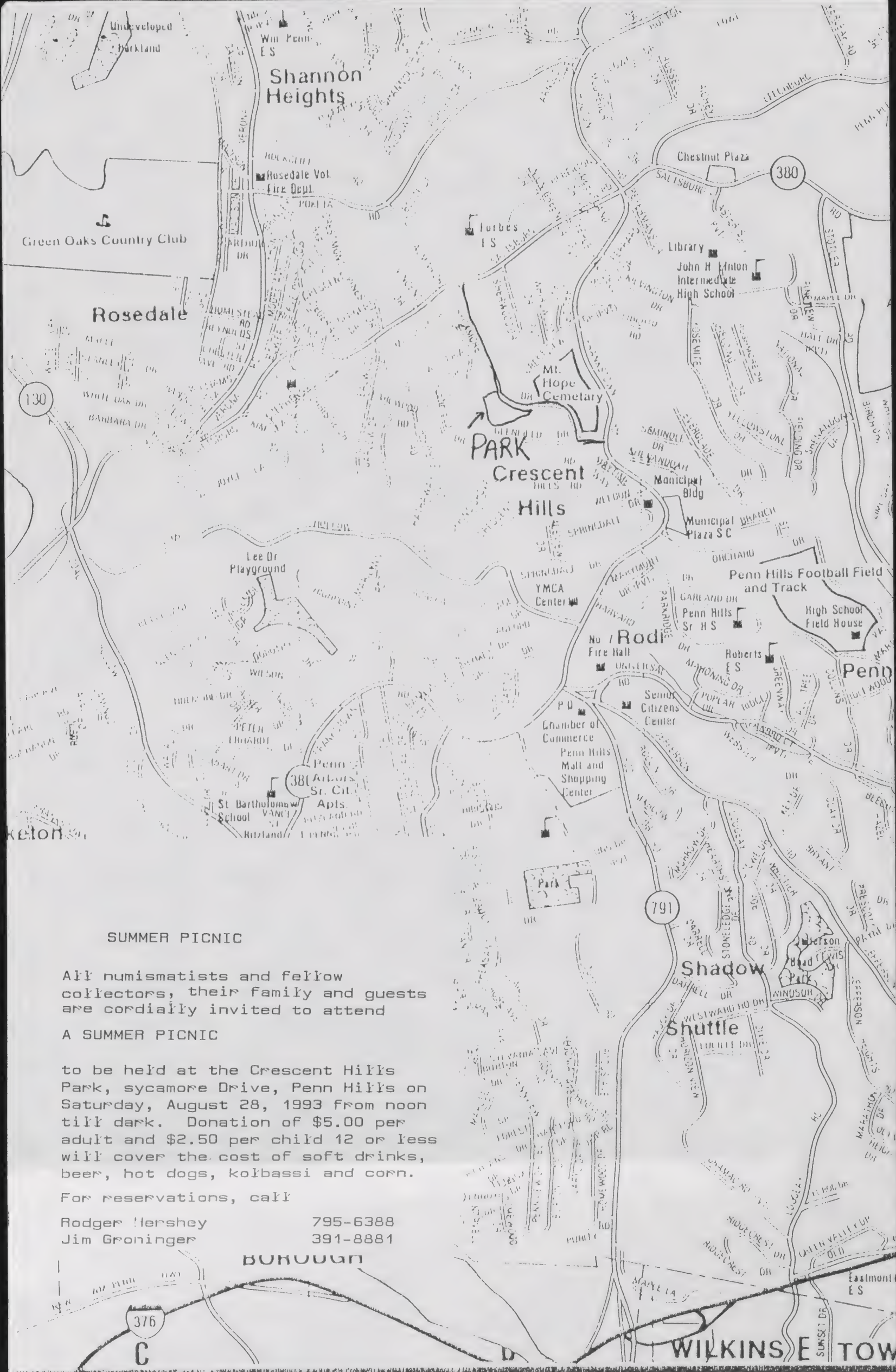
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Respectfully submitted,

Wayne K. Homren

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SUMMER PICNIC

All numismatists and fellow collectors, their family and guests are cordially invited to attend

A SUMMER PICNIC

to be held at the Crescent Hills Park, sycamore Drive, Penn Hills on Saturday, August 28, 1993 from noon till dark. Donation of \$5.00 per adult and \$2.50 per child 12 or less will cover the cost of soft drinks, beer, hot dogs, kolbassi and corn.

For reservations, call

Rodger Hershey 795-6388
Jim Groninger 391-8881

BURDUGH

WILKINS E TOW

WPNS Minutes

July 6, 1993

The July 6th, 1993 meeting was called to order at 8:15 PM by President Jerry Porter. In the absence of Secretary Don Carlucci, Wayne Homren served as Secretary Pro Tem. Wayne read the minutes of the June meeting which were approved. Treasurer Harry Colborn then presented his annual report. The total balance is currently \$3543 including \$600 in the life fund. Harry noted that 1993 dues are due.

Auditing Committee:

Mike Homza presented the committees report noting that the books appear to be in perfect order

Program Committee:

Jerry Porter noted that five meetings for the upcoming year still lack a speaker. Mike Homza offered to organize a round-table program for the September meeting. The sign-up sheet was passed around again.

The November social meeting was discussed next. Potential problems include the cost of the catered meal, and the unavailability of alcoholic drinks. The committee will make further inquiries.

Correspondence: Wayne Homren read the following items:

--A letter from James Taylor of the ANA encouraging the club and its members to contact radio station WDUQ-FM in Pittsburgh about carrying the money talks radio program.

--A letter from PAN containing 25 raffle tickets for sale.

Medal Committee:

Wayne Homren reported results of a conversation he and Don Carlucci had with members of the Red Rose Coin Club in Lancaster. They recommended contacting Silvertowne. In recent years, Red Rose produced 200 silver medals and 500 bronze; sold to members at \$25 for the silver and \$5 for the bronze.

Coin Identification Day:

John Burns reported the available dates for holding Coin Identification Day at the Carnegie. None of the dates seemed to be convenient to the membership. John will recheck to determine other available dates.

New Business:

--ANA Convention: About a dozen members plan to attend the ANA Convention in Baltimore next month. Ted Shiff will have a table.

--WPNS Yearbook: Tom Fort presented an idea for publishing an annual booklet including papers written by the members during the year, plus annual officers reports. Ted Shiff suggested including papers presented in past years. Tom offered to edit and typeset the initial publication. Ted Shiff made a motion to appoint Tom the editor and empower him to begin preparation of the publication. The motion was seconded by Harry Colborn and approved by the membership. Discussion of sale price was tabled until a later date.

Program:

Neil Conner then gave a slide presentation on numismatics of the Pan-Pacific Exposition of 1915. The talk was augmented with an exhibit of medals, tickets, books, postcards and other memorabilia of the Exposition. Several minutes of questions and answers followed.

Exhibits:

Jim Groninger: Two books on Dutch coins.

Wayne Homren: Book: Pessolano-Filos/Medals of the Presidents, Sec. of the Treasury and Directors of the U.S. Mint, 1789-1981.

Larry Dziubek: Advance copy of the new CWTs book on Patriotic Civil War Tokens. The book will be available at the ANA Convention.

Nevin Greninger: Four medals.

Harry Colborn: 15th Anniversary of EAC medal, (in Copper)
25th " " " " , (in Silver)
Two medals produced by Chris Victor McCauley
Medal by Jack Robinson

Jerry Porter: Silver Annamese One Lang rectangular piece, circa 1803.

Ray Gaydash: Group of John F. Kennedy medals and badges and ephemera.

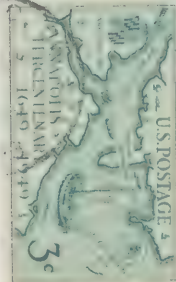
Jerry Veeck: Group of Soviet medals and badges.

Richard Crosby: Two foreign encased postage stamps.

President Jerry Porter reminded the membership that 1993 dues are due

John Burns made a motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Dick Gaetano. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 PM.

WVMS
Catharine Edgerton Lenker
P.O. Box 6909
San Diego, CA 92106



Western Pennsylvania Numis Soc
PO Box 23404
Pittsburgh PA 15222



*Vote for me. I'll
work for you.
Kay*

VOTE
KAY EDGERTON LENKER
ANA Life Member (LM-626)
for the
ANA BOARD of GOVERNORS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIVITIES

Over three decades of service to our hobby;
Exhibitor, lecturer, & ANA certified judge;
Involved member and officer of many clubs;
ANA Convention General Chairman (1983);
ANA Convention Publicity Chairman (3-times);
Panelist for certifying ANA judges;
ANA District Delegate & ANA Club Rep;
Treasurer, California State Numismatic Assn.;
President, California Exonumists' Society;
Treasurer, Numismatic Literary Guild;
Bourse Chairman, Golden State Coin Show;
Bourse Chairman, CSNA Convention (Fresno);
Bourse Chairman, California Exonumist Society;
Bourse Chairman, San Diego Inter-Club Council;
Administrator, organizer & problem solver;
Retired from Scripps Inst. of Oceanography as Scientist,
researcher, meteorologist; and Retired Captain, U.S. Navy Reserve.

KRAUSE PUBLICATIONS' "NUMISMATIC AMBASSADOR."
DEDICATED, EXPERIENCED, SUCCESSFUL, & INNOVATIVE
VOTE FOR KAY EDGERTON LENKER



KAY EDGERTON LENKER, LM 626

for ANA Board of Governors

General Chairman 1983 ANA Convention
in San Diego

Exhibitor * Judge * Numismatist

Organizer * Problem Solver

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WAYNE HAMREN Book: Pessolano-Filos / Medals of the
Presidents, Sec. of the Treasury, and Directors of the ^{U.S.} Mint 1799-1981

BARRY DZUBIK Advance copy of the new CWTs
book on Patriotic Civil War Tokens. The book
will be available at the ANS convention.

NEVIN GREENINGER Four Medals

HARRY COLBORN 15th Anniversary of EAC medal (in copper)

25 " " " (in silver)

Two medals produced by Chris Victor-McLewley

Medal by Jack Robinson

JERRY PORTER Silver Annamese one-wing rectangular
piece circa 1803

RAY GAYDASH Group of John F. Kennedy medals, tokens,
and ephemera.

JERRY VEECK Group of ~~Soviet~~ Soviet medals and badges

RICHARD CROSBY two foreign & encased postage stamps

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The Proceedings of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society

Guidance for Contributors:

The editor of the *PWPNS* welcomes articles, short notices and book reviews from members of the Society. They may deal with any aspect of numismatics and related disciplines of any period.

An article may be generalist or specialized in nature and should be the original work of the author and unpublished in any other journal or magazine. The work may be of any length up to twenty pages.

Presentation: All manuscripts should be typed or printed on one side of the sheet. The typescripts should be double-spaced. All illustrations must be provided by the author(s).

References: Footnotes are NOT required, but they are encouraged. Those authors who do not use footnotes should provide a bibliography of all works consulted for their papers.

Book Reviews: Reviews of any monograph dealing with a numismatic subject are welcomed. The only limitation being that the book or books to be reviewed should have been published no earlier than 1990.

Comments and contributions are welcome from any member of WPNS. Please feel free to speak with me at meetings or to ring me at home.

E. Tomlinson Fort
826-1891

600 West College Ave., Apt. 309
State College, PA 16801
December 3, 1993

Membership Secretary
Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society
P.O. Box 23404
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-9998

Dear Sir:

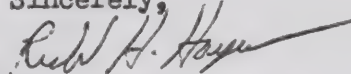
I am writing to make a formal application for membership in the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society, in response to my friend E. Tomlinson Fort's recommendation on my behalf. My educational background has revolved around both a general overview of European history and culture and a special emphasis on Germany, particularly the German Middle Ages. I received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the Pennsylvania State University followed by graduate work in German medieval history from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries, focusing on regional aristocratic relationships. (In connection with this I acquired a knowledge of German and Latin.) I am a member of the Medieval Academy of America, and in the last year I have given papers at two academic conferences on politics in thirteenth century Austria. In October of this year I presented a joint paper with Mr. Fort at the Fifteenth Annual Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists Convention entitled "Return to Imperial Gold: The Augustales Coinage of the Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen."

My interest in numismatics has arisen from my study of concepts of lordship in the German High Middle Ages. In particular, I am interested in the opening and exploitation of silver mines in the Harz Mountain region of Saxony in the tenth century and at Freisach in the thirteenth century, and their effects on coinage and minting rights in Saxony and Austria respectively. I am currently conducting research on the minting rights of the southeastern German aristocracy in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and on the subsequent circulation of

coinages such as the Freisacher pfennig and its imitations. As a consequence of these interests I have begun building a collection of examples of the relevant coin types, especially the south German silver pfennig issued by both royal and local mints.

I hope that my knowledge of numismatics and European history in general, and of medieval Germany in particular as outlined above will be of value to the Society. Because of the distances involved, I will not be able to attend meetings on a regular basis, and I hope that you might consider me for election as a corresponding member. In that context I would be happy to correspond with other members, placing my background at your disposal. I would also attend as many Society functions as geographical considerations permit, and pay whatever fees and dues are requested. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard H. Hayes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard H. Hayes

ETHICS IN NUMISMATICS

as prepared for the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society

Michael T. Homza

Many people consider ethics in numismatics to be an oxymoron, like "honest thief" or "competent legal counsel". This is one of the problems I had in preparing this project. I can think of examples of all three. After all, can we not call a thief who does not deny it, "honest"? We feel more comfortable thinking in terms of black and white but are in reality trapped by large quantities of gray.

As a first thought: If any of us were told that dealer Adabar was selling fake coins, we would most certainly deem him an unethical bum. But what if he sold the coins to be used in an exhibit of fake coins? Does this make his sale ethical? But if the exhibit is broken up and some of the coins end up on the market as genuine, is Mr. Adabar returned to bum status, as he should have foreseen a problem with releasing control of such "dangerous" material?

We could borrow from the field of philosophy their use of two words. If we agree that no one OUGHT to sell fake coins, then to do so under any circumstances is unethical. However, if we can only agree that one SHOULD not sell fake coins, we are left to be judged on a case-by-case basis. For this bit of knowledge, I paid the University of Pittsburgh \$185.00 -- a highly immoral, if not unethical, fee.

The more I have thought about ethics (and its cloistered cousin, morals) throughout my life, the less I've settled in my own mind. One thing I do know: we need to discuss ethical considerations and decisions at every opportunity, especially with those we disagree with. I don't know if it will

make our actions any clearer to others, but at least it will help us define our own thoughts.

In the course of my travels, I stopped at an antique shop that had among its wares a nice rack of muzzleloading rifles. Next to coins, my most profound love is antique firearms. So I "beat feet" over there quick time. And the prices weren't just good deals, they were GREAT! One in particular was a Henry Leman perchbelly halfstock caplock with coin silver furniture, 12 inlays, a patchbox in the stock, a small capbox in the toe, and chased with gold and silver wire - price \$250.00. WORTH THEN, \$1,000.00+.

As I was looking it over (and trying not to drool too much), the dealer came over and told me all about the gun, how rare it was, when it was made, and so on. He knew what he had. So why so cheap? He then offered to know \$50.00 off the price, then to come down to \$160.00. I passed.

I mentioned these guns to a friend that night. He is not only a collector, but also a federal agent. Cutting to the chase, all the rifles were stolen from several states away. The dealer bought them from a little old lady (who turned out to be fencing for many thieves) and at first just thought he made a good buy. Then he got suspicious, so he put low prices to move the pieces before he learned anything.

An NCIC check wouldn't have shown the guns as stolen unless the guy doing the search knew what to ask for and the information from the original report was perfectly entered. These guns have no serial numbers. Separated from the others, like one coin of a collection, it would have been almost impossible for the man who suffered the theft to prove ownership of any one gun.

Would it have been ethical for me to buy the Leman?

Even with my suspicions?

What about the dealer's actions?

Even though he would have had to have taken great lengths to discover the facts?

What about my friend? Is it ethical to use specialized knowledge from your avocation to pursue someone in his vocation?

When will the universe run down and stop?

At a coin shop in Erie (I do go to coin shops now and then), I found three nice coppers for my collection for a total of \$25.00 or so. The dealer slid them in a bank envelope he picked up from a rat's nest of junk next to his register. Like most of us, when I got out to my car, I just had to examine my treasures one more time before driving home. I found in the envelope not only my coppers, but a U.S. \$3.00 gold piece. Key date. I returned it (I still sometimes wonder why - the dealer was a jerk) and did not get thanked. I found out from a local that the dealer had bought it that morning for a particular customer. He set it aside in the envelope until the man stopped in. He thought it was hilarious that some idiot would get a free coin and return it.

What if I had kept the gold piece?

What if he then claimed it was stolen?

Is honesty its own reward or should I have held out for cash?

Are we surprised that dealers like this go bankrupt?

Should we care?

Did you know that some people are only alive because it's against the law to kill them?

Some points on closing. I am no saint. I don't believe in gambling, so when I play poker, I remove the chance aspect by cheating. One particular dearly departed coin dealer supplemented my college fund with all the cherries I picked off his table. When I had trouble with my heart and blood pressure, 27 troops who fought under my command at Monacacy sent my doctor a note of doubt as they could attest to my lack of said organ. I need this discussion as much as anybody.

Michael T. Homza

SOME NOTES ON RUNNING A ROUND TABLE LIKE THIS

Know your crowd. Know who you can get a response from.

Avoid any setup that you know happened to someone in the group unless you clear it in advance.

Don't look for answers. Go for the why.

If this was a dismal failure, DO NOT try to repeat it. Copying a success may not be ethical, but to steal a disaster is just plain stupid!

SETUP: A lady comes into a coin show. She has with her a 1793 chain large cent. It is genuine and grades out XF-AU. She goes to a dealer's table and explains that this is a family hand-down. She needs \$200.00 to get her car fixed. She wants to know if she can get it out of this coin.

What do you offer?

Does it matter if she is old and feeble or young and single?

If she approaches a collector instead of a dealer?

If she comes to you when you are at the "club's" table?

If she asks a price and doesn't name one?

If it happens at a shop instead of a show?

If she is know to you (you recognize her from church)?

If she was sent to you specifically?

If you overhear this at a dealer's table, do you get involved? If you like the dealer? Hate him?

SETUP: A dealer has a coin for sale when a man off the floor examines it and declares it to be a fake.

Should it be pulled from sale?

Should the doubt be passed on to others who show interest in it?

Does the value of the coin matter?

What if the man raising doubt is well dressed? Poorly dressed?

What if he is a "known" (i.e., a Breen, Harris or Severin)?

SETUP: A dealer has a coin for sale. It is a rare variety. It is priced as a common example.

Do you buy it or point out the error to the dealer?

If you buy it, do you make it a point to show others how you "got" dealer J?

Does it matter if it is in a field you collect?

Does it matter if it is a common variety (large date, small date) or a fringe variety (one pointy beak)?

Does it matter if it is a U.S. cent or a Yap stone?

What if the person spotting it is another dealer?

SETUP: A new collector is on the local scene. Shy guy but seems to be serious about the hobby. You come to know him casually. You find out he was a convict.

Does character matter? After all, Billary got elected.

Do you pass word on to others that Newguy might be a problem?

Do you refuse to sponsor him the Stuffy Coin Club or put him off? Do you tell him why?

Does it matter if he reveals his past or you learn of it elsewhere?

That his crime was rape?

assault?

car theft?

child molestation?

possession of narcotics with intent to sell?

being Democratic Chairman?

• 2

SETUP: Some idiot comes up with the brilliant idea of discussing ethics. In numismatics, nonetheless. You try your best but he can't be dissuaded.

Do you writhe in agony?

Resort to gunplay?

Run screaming into the night?

Sell your coins and start collecting pointy earwax from Vulcans?

Open mind, engage mouth and enjoy?

XX

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

PROGRAM

WESTINGHOUSE CASTLE

WILMERDING, PA

NOVEMBER 2, 1993

XX

oo

6:00 PM COCKTAIL HOUR

7:00 PM DINNER

Cauliflower Cheese Soup

Tossed Salad, House Dressing

Entree: Filet Mignon
Broiled Pacific Salmon

Banana Split Cake

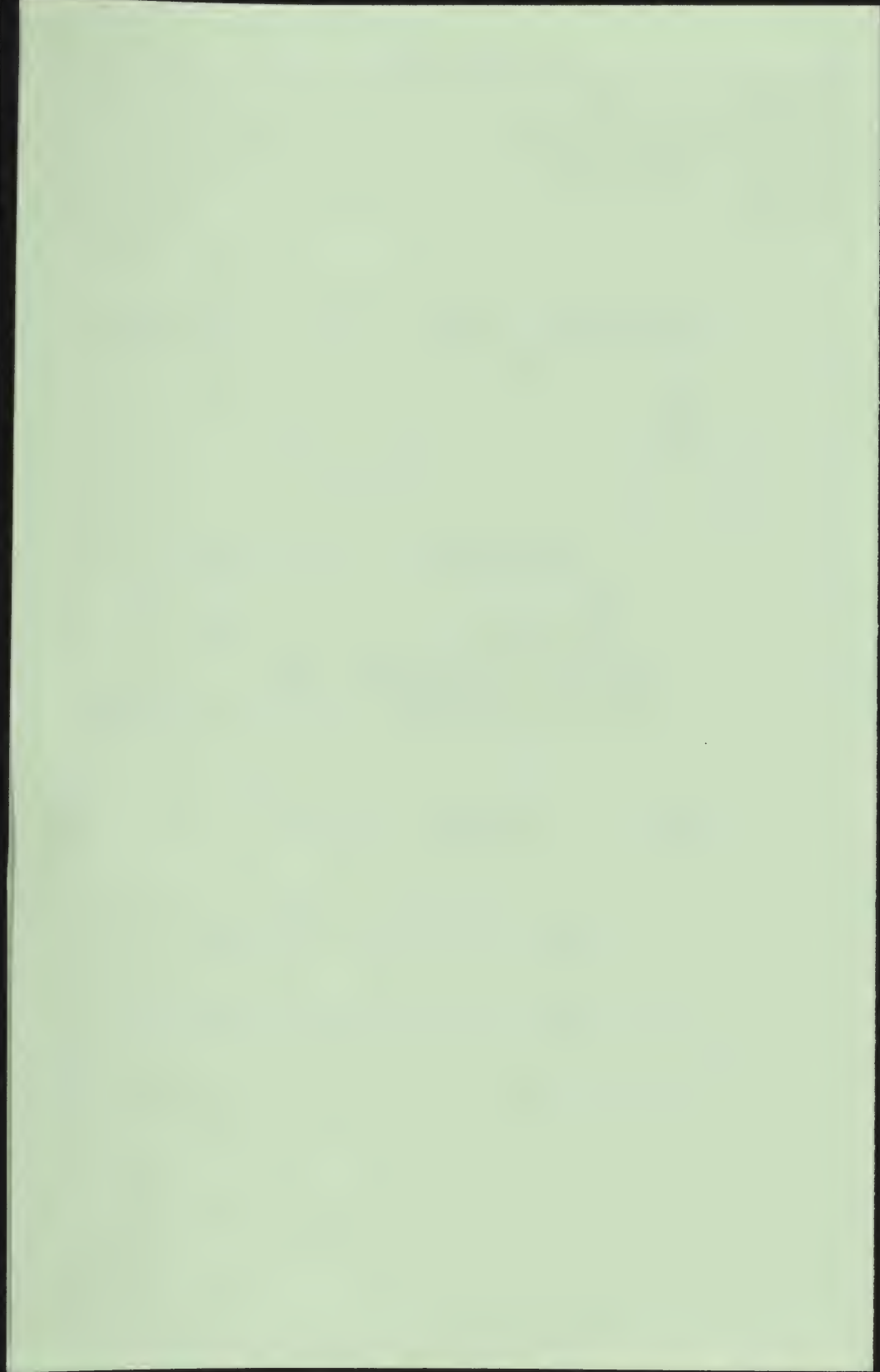
7:45 PM GUEST SPEAKER

CHARLES RUCH,

WESTINGHOUSE HISTORIAN

8:30 PM TOUR OF WESTINGHOUSE MUSEUM

oo



E. Tomlinson Fort
 Dept. of History
 Pennsylvania State University
 New Kensington Campus
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Invicta Roma: The Mint of Rome under Odovacar and the Ostrogoths A.D. 476-554

I. Introduction:

The disintegration of the western portion of the Roman Empire witnessed the birth of a number of successor states which attempted to maintain Roman administrative institutions to various degrees of success. In the case of most of the former provinces many of these institutions were still operating in some form during the imperial collapse and there is good evidence that the Germanic kings made some attempt to preserve them.¹ However, in the case of the late Roman coinage the question is much more ambiguous. Most of the peoples who established kingdoms within the borders of the

An earlier version of this paper was read at the Fourteenth Medieval Forum, Plymouth State College, Plymouth, New Hampshire in April 1993. The author wishes to thank all participants, especially Mr. Frank L. Wiswall and Mr. Richard H. Hayes, for their comments and criticisms though the author alone is responsible for any and all errors.

* The following abbreviations are used: *BMC*: W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Vandals, Ostrogoths and Lombards and of the Empires of Thessalonica, Nicaea and Trebizond in the British Museum* (London, 1911); *DOC*: A.R. Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. 1: *Anastasius I to Maurice, 491-602* (Washington, 1966); *JRS*: *Journal of Roman Studies*; *MEC*: P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, vol. 1: *The Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1986); *NC*: *Numismatic Chronicle*; *PBSR*: *Papers of the British School at Rome*; *PCR*: R.A.G. Carson, *Principle Coins of the Romans*, vol. 3: *The Dominate* (London, 1981); *RN*: *Revue numismatique*.

¹ See especially, W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans A.D. 418-584, The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton, 1980) and the essays in *idem*, *Rome's Fall and After* (London, 1989).

former empire eventually began to strike coins usually modeled upon the types produced in the west during the fifth century.

However, it is another question as to whether they were able to take over the old Roman mint system and run it in the same way as it had operated under the empire. It must be remembered that many Roman provinces had no mints in the fifth century, thus the Vandals, Visigoths and at a much later date the Anglo-Saxons would have had to create their own mints from scratch. In the case of Gaul, mint at Lyon had ceased operations in 413,² while the mint of Trier was closed c.430,³ though Arles seems to have functioned at a steadily decreasing level through the fifth century before it was shut down by 490 at the latest.⁴ Thus, since minting does not seem to have resumed in Gaul until after the death of Clovis in 511 at least a generation had passed since any Gaulish mint had been in operation. Moreover, the lack of any type of centralized mint administration under the Merovingians meant that minting was largely in the hands of private individuals and consequently the complete antithesis of the old Roman system.

The only area of the western Empire where the new Germanic kings took direct control over Roman mint administration was Italy. In the fifth century, three mints were active in the peninsula: Milan (the western imperial capital from 395 to 404), Ravenna (the capital from 404), and Rome. This paper is intended to be an introduction to the coinage produced at the last of these mints during the period from 476 until the end of the Justinianic conquest in 554. I

² See P. Bastien, *Le monnayage de l'atelier de Lyon du règne Jovien à la mort de Jovin (363-413)* (Wetteren, 1987); P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, vol. 1: *The Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1986), p.113; P. Grierson and M. Mays, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection from Arcadius and Honorius to the Accession of Anastasius* (Washington, 1992), 62-3.

³ Grierson and Mays (1992), 68-9.

⁴ Grierson and Mays (1992), 62-3.

hope to examine how well the rulers of Italy took over the control of the late Roman monetary system and what changes they made and whether or not these changes were beneficial. I shall concentrate upon Rome because it became the chief mint of Italy during this period and consequently more evidence regarding it is available.

II. Historical Outline:

With the death of the emperor Theodosius the Great (379-395) in A.D. 395, the Roman Empire was divided between his two sons Honorius (395-423) in the west and Arcadius (395-408) in the east.⁵ In theory, the empire remained a polity united by name, law, coinage, official language (Latin), religion, and dynastic allegiance. However, during the fifth century the eastern and western halves tended to go their own ways. In the west, Roman society was dominated by a small class of great land owning aristocrats. These men were usually members of the Roman senate, this status gave them a sense of identity; they were conservative, if not to say reactionary, in their patriotic and cultural values, but they were reluctant to uphold the empire against the barbarians with cash, or more importantly with the supply of recruits for the Roman army from their estates.⁶

It was during this period that the western empire lost much of its territory and prestige. The weakness of the west was clearly demonstrated by the sacking of Rome in 410 by the

⁵ The standard modern surveys of this period are: T. Burns, *A History of the Ostrogoths* (Bloomington, 1984); J.B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian (A.D. 395 to A.D. 565)* (London, 1923); W. Ensslin, *Theoderich der Grosse*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1959); P. Heather, *Goths and Romans 332-489* (Oxford, 1991); A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire: A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey* (Oxford, 1964); J. Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy* (Oxford, 1992); E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* (Bruges, 1949-59); H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Los Angeles, 1988);

⁶ Some useful studies of the late Roman aristocracy are S.J.B. Barnish, 'Transformation and survival in the western Senatorial aristocracy, c.A.D. 400-700,' *PBSR* 56 (1988), 120-55; A. Chastagnol, *Le sénat romain sous le règne d'Odoacre* (Bonn, 1966); J. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court A.D. 364-425* (Oxford, 1975).

Visigoths and in 455 by the Vandals. By the third quarter of the fifth century little more than Italy was left in Roman hands.

In *A.D.* 476, the underpaid and land hungry Germanic troops which composed the bulk of the western Roman army staged a revolt. Their leader, Odovacar, killed the Roman commander-in-chief, Orestes, and deposed his son, the usurper Romulus Augustulus (475-476). Odovacar settled his soldiers on the estates of northern Italy and established himself as ruler of Italy, though he never styled himself as king of Italy, with his capital at Ravenna, the former imperial administrative centre. He preserved most of the forms and mechanisms of Roman government, nominated consuls and other government ministers and enjoyed some support from the senate. Odovacar seems to have wanted to be acknowledged as the viceroy of the eastern emperor Zeno (474-491) who was theoretically ruler of the whole empire.

While Odovacar did give Italy years of security throughout most of his reign, he never gained the recognition he sought from Constantinople. In 489, Zeno sent against him a horde of Germanic peoples known as the Ostrogoths lead by their king Theodoric. Theodoric was well acquainted with Roman culture and governing institutions. He had spent ten years, from *c.* 461-471,⁷ as a hostage at the eastern capital of Constantinople. For some years Theodoric had been a major factor, often a dangerous and destructive one, in the political scene of the eastern empire. He had been made consul in 484 and granted the title of patrician, nevertheless, Zeno was certainly glad to be rid of him by sending him to Italy.

The war for Italy lasted from 489 until 493 and resulted in a victory for the Ostrogoths. Theodoric seems to have largely followed Odovacar's policies with regards to administration and deferential treatment of the senatorial

⁷ Moorhead (1992), 13-14.

aristocracy. While the Ostrogoths were Arians Christians and thus seen as heretics, Theodoric remained on good terms with the Catholic Church of Italy which was in schism with Byzantium for much of his reign.

Theodoric's relations with foreign powers were somewhat more rocky. His constitutional position with regards to the eastern empire was the subject of lengthy negotiations which in the end satisfied neither side. Like Odovacar he was usually titled king. However, while he made no innovations in Roman law, an area reserved only for emperors, he did use some of the imperial regalia. In 504/505 Ostrogothic Italy and the eastern Empire clashed over the control of Sirmium. The result of the war was an Ostrogothic victory and it gained Italy some security against further Byzantine encroachment.

Theodoric also attempted to secure peaceful foreign ties though dynastic marriages between members of his family and the royal families of the Franks, Burgundians, Vandals and Visigoths. However, this framework was weak and most of the alliances soon fell apart. In 507, for example, the Frankish king Clovis I ousted the Visigoths from central Gaul. Theodoric was forced to intervene and managed to salvage the remnants of their kingdom and annex Provence while officially controlling Visigothic Spain as the regent for his grandson Amalaric.

Theodoric died in 526 and was succeeded by his grandson Athalaric (526-534), who was a minor at the time. The regent was the young king's mother, and Theodoric's daughter, Amalasuintha. This political arrangement was grudgingly accepted by the Byzantine court but Amalasuintha's Roman upbringing and her sex made her unpopular with the Ostrogoths. Her regency was a turbulent one and even after Athalaric reached his majority his mother continued to hold the real reins of power. The lack of power and prestige caused Athalaric to take to drink, which in turn led him to an early grave in 534.

Needing a man to secure her power Amalasuintha married her cousin Theodahad (534-536) and had him king. Theodahad was an unwarlike, but influential figure who was well educated and had a number of personal and intellectual connections to the Roman aristocracy.

Soon after coming to the throne the new king had Amalasuintha imprisoned and later executed. This action gave the eastern emperor Justinian I (527-565) the excuse he needed to invade Italy. Justinian hoped to restore the Roman Empire to its ancient power. He had already restored north Africa to imperial control by defeating the Vandals.

Theodahad was not capable of leading the Ostrogoths against a Byzantine invasion. He was deposed and murdered in 536. His successor was an Ostrogothic commander named Witigis, who married Theodoric's granddaughter Matasuentha to establish a dynastic tie between himself and the former royal family. Unfortunately, Witigis proved a failure as a leader against the eastern general Belisarius. In 540 the Italian capital of Ravenna fell and Witigis was captured and taken as a prisoner to Constantinople. However, the Ostrogoths soon afterwards rebelled, and after a series of minor rulers found a more capable leader in their new king Totila (541-552). Nevertheless, the war would drag on until 562 and in the end Italy came under the rule of Justinian.

While the Italian war eventually resulted in a Byzantine victory, for Italy the results were little short of disastrous. The war devastated the Italian economy which would never fully recover under Byzantine rule. The Roman senatorial aristocracy had largely supported Justinian during the conflict, however the emperor did not reciprocate this support. Italy would largely be governed by officials from the eastern empire.⁸ The government of the city of Rome fell into the hands of the papacy and a few Byzantine officials.

⁸ See T.S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers: Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy A.D. 554-800* (Rome, 1984).

From the point of view of the old senatorial aristocracy the reigns of Odovacar and Theodoric were looked upon as a golden age.

III. General Features:

Before discussing the coinage of the Ostrogoths a few preliminary remarks about the general features of late Roman coinage should be made. The monetary system of the late Roman empire was based upon the reform of the mints and currency undertaken by Diocletian in 294.⁹ On the obverse of each coin was the bust of the emperor or one of his immediate family. By the fifth century no attempt at portraiture was made. One simply has a stylized representation and often the only way to tell the coinage of one emperor from another is by the legend identifying the ruler under whom it was issued.¹⁰

On the reverse of the coin could appear a number of different images usually glorifying the emperor's achievements or proclaiming loyalty to him. In theory, Roman coins were struck in three different metals, gold, silver and bronze in a number of different denominations. However, by the third quarter of the fifth century only the gold *solidus* was produced in any quantity, of the other metals only a token silver coinage was produced and all that was left of the bronze were the small *nummus* pieces which seem to have been virtually worthless since it would have taken thousands to equal the value of one *solidus*.

The coins were struck at a series of mints established throughout the empire, usually near areas of military importance since one of the prime functions of Roman coinage was to pay the army. The mints were divided into workshops,

⁹ For the date of this reform see C.H.V. Sutherland, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 6: *From Diocletian's Reform (A.D. 294) to the Death of Maximinus (A.D. 313)* (London, 1967), 1-2.

¹⁰ See the examples illustrated in R.A.G. Carson, *Principle Coins of the Romans*, vol. 3: *The Dominate* (London, 1981)

or *officinae*, and both the name of the mint, usually in an abbreviated form, and the workshop, usually identified by a number or letter, appeared on the reverse of the coin. By the fifth century the name of the mint sometimes disappears from the gold coinage. Part of the reason for this may have been that at this time gold coinage was most often struck only at the mints near where the emperor was in residence. Replacing the mint name in the exergue was the formula OB (for *obryzum*, the technical term for refined gold), usually linked with COM, for *Comes Obryzi* the official in charge of the quality of the metal used in the coinage.¹¹

The Ostrogoths are known to have produced coins at Ravenna, Rome, Milan and possibly Sirmium.¹² Traditionally, the main mint (at least for the gold coinage) was identified as Ravenna; which served as the imperial and administrative capital for the western empire as well as the kingdoms of Odovacar and the Ostrogothic rulers.¹³ However, in the Baldwin *festchrift* Kent published a stylistic analysis of the extensive Ostrogothic gold coinage without a mint mark struck in Theodoric's reign and conclusively argued that the

¹¹ Grierson and Mays (1992), 31.

¹² The first three mints are easily identified from known examples of the coins that bear their mint marks: See for example, Ravenna (RV): *BMC* 3; Rome (RM): *BMC* 63-66; Milan (MD-for "Mediolanum"): *BMC* 83-84. The possible existence of a mint at Sirmium, which came into Ostrogothic hands in 504, has been argued by I. Meixner, 'Three unknown coins of King Theodoric,' *Numizmatičke vijesti* 15 (1968), 53-5, though this theory is based solely upon provenance. Both P. Lederer, 'La zecca di "Ticinum" Pavia sotto Odoacro,' *Atti e Memorie dell'Istituto italiano di numismatica* 8 (1934), 145-51 and G. Lacam, *La fin de l'empire romain et le monnayage or en Italie 455-493*, vol. 2 (Lucerne, 1983), 863-80, have erroneously interpreted the T plus officina letter at the end of the reverse inscription on some *solidi* of the emperor Zeno as the mint mark for Ticinum (modern Pavia). J. Lallemand, 'Sou d'or de Zénon frappé à Thessalonique,' *Bulletin du Centre d'Etudes numismatique* 1 (1964), 49-51, has demonstrated that these pieces were struck at Thessalonica and consequently neither Italian nor Ostrogothic in origin. Likewise, Arles was held by the Ostrogothic kingdom between 509 and 533, though at present no known coins can be associated with it.

¹³ W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Vandals, Ostrogoths and Lombards and of the Empires of Thessalonica, Nicea and Trebizond in the British Museum* (London, 1911), attributes all gold pieces without a mint name to Ravenna.

main mint for the gold coinage was in fact Rome.¹⁴ This thesis combined with the fact that almost all of the bronze coinages struck under the Ostrogoths essay a Rome mint signature, strongly suggests that Rome rather than Ravenna was the principal Ostrogothic mint.

If such is the case then the next obvious question is why this administrative change? In the late fifth and sixth centuries Rome remained a city of some importance but all the other functions of the centralized governance of Italy were carried out in Ravenna. Before 476 Ravenna was the chief mint of gold coinage in Italy and the same is the case after the Justinianic conquest in the mid-sixth century.¹⁵

Exactly when the change from Ravenna to Rome occurred is uncertain. Lacam, in his stylistic analysis of the late fifth century Italian gold coinage, attributes a larger number of the gold coins produced during Odovacar's reign to Ravenna.¹⁶ Though one wonders how much of this is due to the fact that Odovacar had lost control over Milan in September 489 and Rome before April 490, and was confined to Ravenna until his murder in March 493. The military situation of Theodoric's invasion would have required the production of more coinage to pay the troops, especially as Odovacar's position worsened and this may have called for an unusual increase in the amount of coins struck. Since for the last two years of his reign Ravenna was the only mint available to Odovacar, this could lead to a distortion of the evidence as to the importance of the city as a mint throughout the reign.

Likewise, one could argue that since Ravenna was out of Theodoric's hands until 493 it may be that he increased the

¹⁴ J.P.C. Kent, 'The coinage of Theodoric in the names of Anastasius and Justin I,' in *Mints, Dies and Currency*, ed. R.A.G. Carson (London, 1971), 67-74.

¹⁵ Grierson and Mays (1992), 64-6. Ravenna was the chief mint for gold coinage in Italy though before 476 it seems to have only on rare occasions issued silver and bronze denominations. After the Byzantine conquest of Italy in addition to a substantial gold coinage it also produced bronze coins on a regular basis.

¹⁶ Lacam, (1983), 788-809.

gold production of the Roman mint to meet his immediate needs and allowed the situation to remain in place after his acquisition of Ravenna. The only problem with this hypothesis is that Rome seems to have been producing the bulk of the Italian bronze coinage well before Theodoric's invasion of Italy, and it would be unlikely that the chief centre of bronze production would be separated from the principal mint producing gold.

A more likely answer for the re-emergence of Rome as the principle Italian mint may lie in the relations between the Germanic kings of Italy and the Roman senate. After 476 many of the bronze coins, and a few extremely rare silver pieces struck at Rome during the reign of Theodoric, bear the letters SC (for *Senatus consulto*) on their reverse. There is also a unique gold *semissis* with the legend VOT/PC/* on the shield held by a seated Victory.¹⁷ This is presumably an abbreviation of *Vota Patrum Conscriptorum* ("the prayers of the Conscript Fathers").¹⁸

This legend indicating that the coins had been issued by the authority of the Senate, first appeared towards the end of the second century B.C. on *denarii* which were issued to deal with fiscal emergencies.¹⁹ The establishment of the principate under Augustus (31 B.C.-A.D.14), saw the control over the bronze coinage given to the Senate, while the emperor retained the exclusive authority to strike gold and silver issues. This situation remained in place until Diocletian's reform of 296 when the control over the production of coinage became an imperial monopoly.

It is well known that among the Roman aristocracy of the fifth and sixth centuries there was a strong movement of

¹⁷ The coin is currently in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, with a history going back to the late eighteenth century. It is illustrated in P. Grierson, 'The date of Theodoric's gold medallion,' *Hikun* 11 (1985), p.20 fig. 1d.

¹⁸ Kent (1971), 70.

¹⁹ M.H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, rev. ed., vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1983), 606-9.

antiquarianism. As Jones has pointed out,²⁰ the Germanic rulers of Italy needed the support of the senatorial aristocracy to govern as well as in their negotiations with the eastern emperors and one way to gain this approval would be to restore one of the Senate's ancient rights. Moreover, the evidence of the rare *siliquae* bearing the SC on the reverse indicate that senatorial authority certainly extended over the silver coinage and possibly the gold pieces struck at Rome.²¹

In the administration of the coinage, as seems to have been the case with Italy in general, the Germanic kings seem to have made few changes. Like the emperors, the kings had their quaestors, masters of the offices and *comes rei privatae* and *sacrarum largitionem* to handle fiscal administration.²² More importantly, the famous letter from King Theodoric to Boethius indicates that the king was interested in preserving the quality of the coinage and maintaining a stable exchange rate between the various denominations.²³

IV. The Gold Coinage:

The gold coinage struck during the period under consideration all bears the name of the eastern emperor, either Anastasius, Justin I or Justinian. The only exception to this is the unique triple solidus medallion of Theodoric which seems to have been struck to commemorate his military successes over the Visigoths in 508/9.²⁴ Sadly, the mint

²⁰ Jones, (1964), 253-4.

²¹ Grierson, (1985), 21 seems to believe that the Roman mint was completely under the Senate's control.

²² Jones (1964), 253.

²³ Cassiodorus, *Variae* I.X. See L.C. Csaki, 'Varium I.X of Cassiodorus as a program of monetary policy,' *Florilegium* 9 (1987), 53-63 and *idem*, 'Money and order in the *Variarum Libri XII* of Cassiodorus,' *Acta* 15 (1990), 137-49.

²⁴ Grierson (1985), 19-26. Illustrated in *Ibid.*, p.20 fig.1a; *EMC*, frontis-piece and F.F.Kraus, *Die Münzen Odovacers und des Ostgotenreiches in Italien* (Halle, 1928), frontis-piece.

name on this piece is concealed by the mount but Kent's stylistic analysis of Theodoric's gold coinage has shown that it must have been produced at Rome.²⁵

Three denominations were struck, *solidi*, *semisses* (one half a *solidus*) and (one third of a *solidus*). The *solidus* was the main unit of gold produced during the late Roman, Ostrogoth and early Byzantine periods and was the standard upon which all other denominations were based. The *tremisses* were produced at a lesser scale, but enough survive to indicate that they also played an important rôle in the coinage that circulated in Italy. On the other hand only a few specimens of the *semisses* are known. This is a strong indication that either this denomination was unpopular and/or that it was produced strictly for ceremonial occasions and served the purpose of a small medallion rather than a full coin.

Those *solidi* and *tremisses* struck under Odovacar most if not all bear the name of the emperor Zeno (d.491).²⁶ Theodoric's earliest gold coins from the mint of Rome may also have been in Zeno's name, but the bulk of the gold coins from his reign must bear either the names of Anastasius (491-518) or Justin (518-527). Most of these *solidi* and *tremisses* bear only the name of the eastern emperor, however there are a few exceptional pieces which have either Theodoric's monogram or the Greek letter *theta* (for Theodoric) at the end of the obverse legend.²⁷

These pieces have attracted the attention of a number of scholars. They are a distinct minority among the gold pieces produced during Theodoric's reign and they have been associated with the gold medallion mentioned above. In his attributional study of this series Grierson argued that the legend of the Theodoric medallion which reads REX THEODORICVS VICTOR GENTIVM is a commemoration of Theodoric's

²⁵ Kent (1971), 70.

²⁶ See for example: *EMC*.1-7, 12-15 (pp.44-5).

²⁷ See for example: monogram: *EMC*.64-66; *theta*: *EMC*.63.

victory over the Franks and Burgundians in 509 which lead to the annexation of Provence.²⁸

However, one must ask the question why Theodoric chose this time to produce a series with either his monogram or, in the case of the gold medallion, his name. Unfortunately, there is no documentary evidence mentioning the series. Nevertheless, a possible answer may lie in his relations with the Roman aristocracy.

The general consensus among historians is that for most of his reign Theodoric had a generally good relationship with the Roman senate. Only in the last two or three years of his reign is this situation though to have deteriorated to some extent. However, in his recent monograph, Moorhead has suggested that during the period from c.509 to c.520 Theodoric's relationship with the traditional senatorial aristocracy deteriorated to a certain extent.²⁹ Moorhead has noted that the men who held the consulship and other important offices during this period were not of the same distinguished backgrounds as those occupying these offices during the preceding and succeeding periods. The sudden influx of so many *novi homines* must be an indication that the relations between Theodoric and the traditional aristocrats were rather strained. At least part of the reason for this may be the fact that during the papal schism that resulted over the disputed election of Pope Symmachus (498-514) in 498. Theodoric after some hesitation backed the legitimate candidate, Symmachus, while many of the Roman aristocracy seem to have backed his rival Laurentius.

Theodoric's issuing of a gold medallion in which he is depicted in quasi-imperial regalia and the appearance of his monogram on the gold coinage of the Roman mint may be indications that he was threatening to extend his power over the Roman aristocracy to a greater extent than he had

²⁸ Grierson (1985), 23-5.

²⁹ Moorhead (1992), 147-66.

previously. Throughout the late fifth and sixth centuries gold coinage was seen as an exclusive imperial right.³⁰ While the Theodoric medallion was technically a commemorative piece and not a coin, it still must have been seen by contemporaries as skating dangerously close to breaking the imperial monopoly. Likewise, the appearance of Theodoric's monogram on the *solidi* and *tremisses* struck at about the same time was probably intended as a mark guaranteeing the quality of the gold coinage. Once again this could be interpreted as a sign of the Ostrogothic king taking over what many considered an imperial prerogative.

However, the fact that these monogrammed gold coins are so rare is probably an indication that the practice was either deemed unnecessary or that it aroused more hostility among the Romans than Theodoric cared to handle.

Theodoric's successors Athalaric (526-534) and Theodahad (534-536) also had coins struck in the name of the emperor Justinian, but at present it is not possible to distinguish which pieces were struck in which particular reign. Nevertheless, the coins are of high quality both in regards to consistency of weight and the quality of gold. This would indicate that during this ten year period the Ostrogothic government continued to keep a steady eye on the quality of the gold *solidi* and *tremisses* produced in Italy.

V. The Silver Issues:

The silver coinage from the reign of Odovacar is of extreme rarity with only a few pieces known. On the obverse is the name of the king (FL ODOVAC for *Flavius Odovacar*), while the reverse consists of a royal monogram.³¹ The fact that these issues do not bear the name of the eastern emperor, unlike the more substantial Ostrogothic silver, probably indicates that they were struck late in the reign

³⁰ Procopius, *BG*.III.33.5-6.

³¹ See for example: *BMC*.8 &9 (p.44) and *MEC*.I.63.

and thus after the Byzantine court had shifted its support to Theodoric. This series also sports the mint mark for Ravenna which indicates that it was produced there rather than at Rome.

The Ostrogothic silver coinage consists primarily of two denominations, conventionally referred to as half- and quarter-*siliquae*, weighing about 1.4 g. and 0.7 gr respectively. The obverse consists of a profile imperial bust, often of a style similar to that of the gold *tremissis*, along with the name of the eastern emperor. The reverse type normally consists of either a royal monogram or the king's name and title in several lines across a field.

Sadly, these silver issues do not usually bear a mint mark, with the exception of a few rare examples from Milan.³² However, the formula *Invicta Roma* does appear on some specimens and there are rare specimens with the letters SC in the reverse field.³³ This must indicate that Rome was an active mint during the Ostrogothic period and based on the evidence of the gold and bronze coinage it is likely to have been the principle mint for silver. However, until more stylistic analysis is done this conclusion must remain tentative at best.

VI. The Bronze Issues:

It was in the bronze coinage that the Ostrogoths demonstrated the most innovative practices. During the first three quarters of the fifth century bronze coinage had virtually disappeared from circulation. The only bronze coin which circulated in the western empire was the *nummus*, a small piece with a weight standard which was ideally set at somewhere around 1.46 grams though lower weights are not uncommon.

³² See for example: *MEC*.I.119

³³ See for example: *BMC*.73 (p.57).

That Italy and other regions were starved of a substantial bronze coinage can be seen by the unusual series of countermarked first and second century *asses* and *sestertii*. These coins bear either the value mark XLII or LXXXIII.³⁴ In her study of the series, Morrisson demonstrated that these markings were unofficial and that these coins must represent finds which were marked by private individuals and returned to circulation, officially or otherwise, in the late fifth/early sixth century.³⁵ In her article she argued that they were likely to be a product of Vandal North Africa, though she did believe that they also circulated in late fifth and sixth century Italy.³⁶

More recently, Grierson and Blackburn have argued against a North African origin for the series pointing out that most of the finds of these countermarked pieces occur in Italy and that the value marks indicate exact fractions of the *siliqua*.³⁷ The large and heavy *sestertii* with LXXXIII (83 *nummi*) would serve as thirds while the *asses* and *dupondii* with XLII (42 *nummi*) would serve as sixths. These fractions would certainly be more convenient for making change for a *siliqua* than the Senatorial series which was valued at 40 and 20 *nummi* respectively.

Shortly after the succession of Odovacar in 476 a large 40-*nummus* piece was produced at Rome in the name of the emperor Zeno. The series appears to have been brief since only two sets of dies are known to have struck all the surviving specimens. The bust is obviously modeled upon the bust found on coins of the earlier empire. The dating of the series remains a major problem. Kent and Hendy have placed

³⁴ See for example: *MEC*.I.65-91.

³⁵ C. Morrisson, 'The re-use of obsolete coins: the case of Roman imperial bronzes revived in the late fifth century,' in *Studies in Numismatic Method*, ed. C.N.L. Brooke, B.H.I.H. Stewart, J.G. Pollard and T.R. Volk (Cambridge, 1983), 95-112.

³⁶ Morrisson, *op cit.*, see also F.M. Clover, 'Relations between North Africa and Italy, A.D. 476-550,' *RNC* 33 (1991), 112-33.

³⁷ Grierson and Blackburn (1986), 28-31.

it towards the end of Odovacar's reign (c.490) after Theodoric's occupation of Rome,³⁸ while Hahn and Moorhead have dated the series to the mid-480s.³⁹

Grierson and Blackburn point out that the question turns upon the interpretation of the IIII beneath the head on the obverse. If it is an officinae mark, as is the case on the later Senatorial issues then it is irrelevant for dating purposes. Despite this resemblance to the officinae marks on later coins, this type of mark accompanying an imperial representation is an anomaly. In earlier times numbers following the imperial inscription signified the number of times that the emperor had been granted tribunician power or held the consulship or had occupied some other office. If the number IIII is a regnal year, as late fifth century practice would lead one to expect, then the coin would have been struck in 477 since Zeno came to power in 474. If one combines this with the known fact that Odovacar instructed the Roman Senate to send back the imperial ornaments to Zeno and instructed him to take over the government of the west then 477 would appear to be a more likely date for this issue.⁴⁰

This brief series was followed by a more substantial one consisting of a *follis* and half-*follis* with the obverse inscription INVICTA ROMA with a helmeted bust of Roma. This obverse portrait was obviously inspired by the *Aes* 3 series struck under Constantine the Great and his sons which commemorated the founding of Constantinople as the second imperial capital and Rome as the old capital. The obverse legend is rare among the Roman series and seems only to have been used by the pretender Priscus Attalus (409-410) on his

³⁸ J.P.C. Kent, 'Zeno and Leo, the Most Noble Caesars,' *NC* 19 (1959) and M.F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy* (Cambridge, 1985), 488-9.

³⁹ W. Hahn, *Moneta Imperii Byzantini*, vol. 1: *Von Anastasius I. bis Justinianus I. (491-565)* (Vienna, 1973), 79 and Moorhead (1992), 23.

⁴⁰ Grierson and Blackburn (1986), 31-2.

solidi as well as a silver medallion struck at Rome between the autumn of 409 and his deposition in June 410.⁴¹

The reverse types of the series are either the traditional Roman eagle or the even more traditional image of Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf. The reverse always includes a mark of value (XL or XX for 40 and 20 nummi respectively) and the *folles* also have an *officina* numeral which is either in Roman (I-V) or Greek (A-E) numerals. The number of *officinae* and the large number of dies employed in this series would indicate a substantial issue.

These large senatorial *folles* and half-*folles* also had an impact beyond the shores of Italy. The Vandals, sometime around 480, began to strike their own large denomination bronze coinage (valued at XLII, XXI, and XII respectively) which appears to have been quite substantial in size. Likewise, in 498, the eastern emperor Anastasius carried out a reform of the coinage which involved the reintroduction of the large *folles* as well as other multiples of the *nummus*.⁴²

In addition to this senatorial coinage there was also a royal bronze series. Before the reign of Athalaric (526-534) the bronze coinage struck at Rome was purely senatorial, however in his reign both *decanummia* (X nummi pieces)⁴³ with INVICTA ROMA on the obverse and DN ATHALRICVS REX on the reverse. These can be distinguished from those struck at Ravenna by the appearance of the SC in the field.

Athalaric's invasion of the Senate's right over bronze coin production was expanded by Theodahad (534-536). He replaced the Roma obverse with his own portrait along with the legend DN THEODAHADVS REX on the obverse and VICTORIA

⁴¹ For examples see *PCR* nos. 1521 & 1522. For a discussion of the coinage see Grierson and Mays (1992), 222-3.

⁴² See especially, D.M. Metcalf, *The Origins of the Anastasian Currency Reform* (Chicago, 1969); P. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* (London, 1982), 59-60; Hendy (1985), 490-2.

⁴³ See for example, *BMC* 62-71; *MEC* I. 132-134.

PRINCIPVM on the reverse.⁴⁴ However, the Senate still seems to have preserved its rights since SC continues to appear in the reverse field. This serves of *folles* is one of the most unique struck by any Germanic ruler. The reason for it must be a combination of Theodahad's known interest in Roman antiquities and the fact that alone among the Ostrogothic rulers of Italy he spent most of his reign in Rome.⁴⁵ Likewise it may also be a demonstration of his deteriorating relationship with the eastern empire. A damaged piece currently in the Berlin coin cabinet has a reverse legend which may read VICTORIA AVGVST.⁴⁶ If this is the case, it may be an indication that with the Byzantine invasion of Italy Theodahad may have tried to assume the title of the western Augustus.

After Theodahad's overthrow, his successor Witigis (536-540) does not seem to have issued any coins from the Roman mint, the obvious reason for this being that the Ostrogoths lost control of the city in December of 536. King Baduila (541-552) was able to regain control over Rome between April 547 and January 550 and consequently issued a few rare decanummia in his own name,⁴⁷ but by this time the principle Ostrogothic mint had become Pavia.

VII. The Byzantine Aftermath:

The fall of Italy to the armies of Justinian brought the mint of Rome back under imperial control and also witnessed a reduction in its importance in favour of Ravenna. The mint under Justinian produced only a limited gold coinage until c.549 which was probably intended to pay the troops occupying the city. Though there was a complete change in the portrait style; the traditional western three quarter facing bust

⁴⁴ See for example, *BMC*.19-23; *MEC*.I.141-143.

⁴⁵ Grierson and Blackburn (1986), 38.

⁴⁶ The coin is listed in Kraus (1928), 148 and illustrated in *Ibid*, pl. X no.41.

⁴⁷ See for example, *MEC*.I.162.

replaced by the Byzantine full facing bust.⁴⁸ The bronze coinage was more extensive. The earliest pieces being folles and half-folles with a right facing bust. These are somewhat similar to those produced under Theodahad, though the workmanship is much poorer quality.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, they should probably be dated to the early 540s.⁵⁰ After the city's final recapture in 552 the standard Byzantine facing bust was introduced.⁵¹

VIII. Conclusion:

It now remains to sum up both how well the Ostrogoths were able to administer the mint of Rome as well as what impact their control over it and the other Italian mints had upon the coinages circulating in the lands once unified by the rule of Rome. In both cases the conclusions reached by this historian are that the surviving coin evidence strongly indicates that the Ostrogoths were able to maintain the quality of the Italian coin throughout most of the period of their control of the peninsula. Only with the invasion of Belasarius in 536 did the quality of the coinage collapse.

One reason for this success must lie in the fact that the Germanic kings used Roman officials to administer the mints. However, this is certainly not the only reason. The Germanic rulers of North Africa, Spain and Gaul also used former imperial officials in their administrations but their coinages never developed the same wide range of types and denominations as were produced in Italy. Likewise, the artistic skill demonstrated by the Italian die-cutters, especially in the reign of Theodahad, is not equalled by those of any other contemporary state. One has only to compare Theodahad's bronze coinage with Justinian's early

⁴⁸ See for example: *DOC.I.318-320.*

⁴⁹ See for example: *DOC.I.321-325.*

⁵⁰ Grierson, (1982), 71.

⁵¹ See for example: *DOC.I.329-330*

Italian issues to demonstrate the lack of Byzantine interest in the quality of material produced by their die-cutters.⁵²

Likewise, the Ostrogoths' re-introduction of a substantial silver and bronze coinage certainly filled an important need in the Italian, if not to say the Mediterranean, economy. The fact that the Byzantine emperor Anastasius followed the Ostrogothic example would appear to be a strong indication that there was a strong demand for similar coinages in the eastern part of the Mediterranean.

These factors can lead one to conclude that while in the long run the Ostrogothic state was not nearly as successful as the kingdoms established by the Franks in Gaul, the Visigoths in Spain or the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, their coinage had a far greater impact upon the numismatic picture of the late fifth and early sixth centuries than one would at first believe. Likewise, their successful administration of the coinage is evidence that Germanic rulers could both take over and even improve the running of a late Roman institution.

⁵² For more discussion on this general subject see J.P.C. Kent, 'Roman imperial coinage in decline,' *NC* 148 (1988), iii-xiii.

Appendix I:

A letter from Theodoric the Great to the illustrious patrician Boethius (c. 507x512).⁵³

While the whole people should be granted the common justice that wins the honour of its name by extending its equitable control equally among the great and the humble, those who remain in the service of the palace still seek it with special confidence. For on men of leisure the royal generosity bestows its gifts gratuitously; but customary rewards are paid as a kind of debt to the dutiful retainer.

The horse and foot guards, who keep constant watch over my court, have made this complaint to me in joint petition - the usual result of serious grievances: they do not receive *solidi* of full weight as their customary wages from X the Prefect's treasurer, and they suffer heavy losses in the number of coins. Therefore, your wisdom, trained by learned texts, is to expel this criminal falsehood from the company of truth, so that no one will be tempted to diminish that purity.

For, among the world's incertitudes, this thing called arithmetic is established by a sure reasoning that we comprehend as we do the heavenly bodies. It is an intelligible pattern, a beautiful system, an integral study. It is an intelligible pattern, a beautiful system, an integral study, an unchanging science, that both binds the heavens and preserves the earth. For is there anything that lacks measure, or transcends weight? It includes all, it rules all, and all things have their beauty because they are perceived under its standard. It is a pleasure to observe how the decad [*denarius*], like the heavens, turns on itself, and is never found lacking. That same reckoning increases on new terms, constantly added to itself by repeating itself, so that, although the decad is not exceeded, it has the power to build up large numbers from small. This process is many times repeated: by bending and straightening the fingers of the hand, it is prolonged indefinitely; and, for every time that the computation is brought back to its beginning, it is unquestionably by so much.⁵⁴ The sands of the sea, the drops of the rain, the shining stars are defined by a calculable quantity. Indeed, to the author of its being [ie. God], every creature is numbered, nothing that comes into existence can be separated from that condition.

And- since it is my delight to discourse with learned men on more mysterious elements of this discipline- although

⁵³ Cassiodorus, *Variae* I.10. The translation is that of S.J.B. Barnish though some minor editorial changes have been made.

⁵⁴ The exact meaning of this passage is somewhat obscure, but it seems to describe the origin and arithmetical uses of the decimal base; ten was regarded with special reverence in the Pythagorean philosophical tradition which was an influence upon Boethius.

coins themselves may seem contemptible from their common use, we should still remark with how much reason they were marshalled by men of old. They decided that 6000 *denarii* should form a *solidus* with this aim, that the shaped circle of shining metal, as if it were solar gold, should fittingly imply the time-span of the world.⁵⁵ But, as for the hexad [*senarius*], which learned antiquity rightly defined as the perfect number, they stamped it with the name of the ounce [*uncia*] which is the prime unit of measure; and by reckoning it twelve times, like the months, they made up the full pound to match the courses of the year. Oh, the inventions of the wise, the judgement of our ancestors! They discovered something which both marks off what is necessary to human purposes, and figuratively implies so many mysteries of nature. Rightly, then, it is called a pound, since it is weighed by such contemplation of the world.

The violation, then, of such mysteries, the will so to confound certainties, surely this is a foul and cruel mangling of truth itself? Trading in goods should continue; men may buy cheap and sell dear; and the people must have reliable weights and measures, since everything is confused if frauds and purity mingle. Clearly, what is granted to workers should not be pruned; rather, where honest service is exacted, let an undiminished reward be bestowed. Give a *solidus*, by all means, and reduce it again, if you can; hand over a pound, and diminish it, if you are able. Against these actions, there is an obvious defence in the very names of the things: either you render the entire sum, or you are not paying what those names refer to. You cannot in any way, you cannot designate whole units, while making criminal reductions. See to it, then, both that the ruler of the treasury obtains his just and customary perquisites, and that what I bestow on the well deserving, they receive intact.

⁵⁵ Cassiodorus here plays upon the words *sol*, meaning sun, and *solidus*.

Appendix II:*Rulers of Italy:*

Odovacar (476-493)
Theodoric the Great (493-526)
Athalaric (526-534)
 [Amalasuitha (526-535)]
Theodahad (534-536)
Witigis (536-540)
Hildebad (540-541)
Erario (541)
Totila (541-552)
Theia (552)

Eastern Emperors:

Zeno (475-476)
Basiliscus (475-476)
Zeno (476-491, restored)
Anastasius I (491-518)
Justin I (518-527)
Justinian I (527-565)

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